

Asheville Transit Committee Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, 1 October 2013

Attending:

Committee Members: Dave Erb, Bruce Emory, Julie Mayfield, Tom Tomlin

City Staff: Norman Schenck, Mariate Echeverry, Yuri Koslen, Tristan Winkler

Community Members: David Wilson, Lyuba Zuyeva, Michelle Dohse, Darlene Hamlin

City Council Liaison: Gordon Smith

3:38 pm - Opening of Meeting

Julie opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Dave read the Announcement for Public Comment.

1 October 2013 Agenda

Mariate reported that minutes will still be posted on the web, though site will change.

Yuri has responded to David Boshart's concerns (Sept meeting) with a one-on-one meeting.

3 September 2013 Minutes: Bruce moved, Tom seconded, approved unanimously.

3:46 pm - Public Comment I

Lyuba reported that the deadline for JARC funding is 31 October, details can be found on the FBMPO website. STPDA (?) funding will be available in Spring 2014 for capital projects.

David Wilson has concerns with W2 bus driver not keeping hands on the wheel.

3:50 pm - TC Experiences Riding the Bus

Tom has had good experiences on N, some lateness on other lines. Julie loves W4. Dave commented about driver jerkiness and order of automated announcements on N1. Bruce has noticed N2 passing the shelter at Lakeshore and Merrimon without picking up the passengers waiting there; possible solutions to alleviate the confusion (drivers' and passengers') were discussed. Bruce also observed S1 pulling out of the Transit Center hastily after two other buses had just arrived (all three buses were late at the time), causing passengers to miss transfers.

3:58 pm – New Business

Rider Survey -

Just Economics has already done their survey, ART hasn't done ours yet. Julie wants to know if we're still interested and, if so, how we'll implement it (resources, etc.). Mariate says survey is ready, staff is thinking in terms of the early part of November. Drivers would hand them out, riders would put them into boxes at the Transit Center and on the buses. TC may also provide some volunteer help with information, dissemination, and collection. Julie raised question re: using Just Economics' database system to collect, analyze, and disseminate ART's survey data.

Neighborhood Festival -

Multi-Modal Commission and its committees have been asked to table at the Neighborhood Festival (UNC Asheville Sherrill Center, Sunday, 27 October, 2:30-5:30). Julie and Bruce will coordinate to cover it.

4:10 pm – Old Business

Open TC seats -

ART has posted notice at Transit Center; includes form similar to Boards and Commissions application. Mariate

will send a copy to TC members, Yuri will send out a copy on iride. Julie requests additional questions re: applicants' relevant skills and motivations for applying. TC members, ART staff, and City staff would like to see preference given to regular bus riders, people with adequate time to devote to TC activities, public speaking and outreach skills, messaging/marketing experience, and Title VI diversity (especially foreign language capability and minority status). Julie requested an application deadline of 31 October, and the rest of the TC agreed.

TC Goals -

Two more public outreach meetings (Battery Park Apartments and First Baptist Church) have been completed, with good attendance and results. Julie has spoken to Sierra Nevada. They're planning to run their own Asheville shuttle (in concert with Oskar Blues?), so are less interested than before in partnering with ART. Yuri and Mariate have been in contact with MAHEC about Passport; process is moving along nicely. Yuri has arranged a tabling opportunity with Oakley Farmers' Market, will communicate details to TC.

Tom has been attending drivers' meetings. Routes, safety questions, and other issues are being discussed. The general feeling seems to be that the forum is a "safe" opportunity for the drivers to raise issues; thus, very useful to all concerned parties.

Sunday Service -

A matrix of TMP implementation alternatives (which includes original TMP schedules and budgets) was included in meeting packet. Capital cost for Zillicoa Street improvements needed to allow N route conversion to circulator (from U-shaped route) was discussed. Timing issues with C route are still problematic. Saturday ridership has been about 80 percent of weekday ridership; there may be some opportunities for minor adjustment, but reduction of some Saturday routes and hours per original TMP no longer appears feasible.

Gordon requested that TC members communicate to Council the various issues with C route, with the understanding that most Council members are already well aware of the demand for Sunday service. TC reiterated the importance of Sunday service, and requested that limited Sunday service be given top priority for funding. Gordon suggested that limited Sunday service would provide ridership data which could be evaluated in deciding future priorities.

Tom raised issue of Long Shoals / Biltmore Park service, which would improve Hendersonville Road service between downtown and Long Shoals. S3 tends to have very high load factors (due to long rides). Yuri gives C route very high priority, since C is "the route where the Master Plan hasn't delivered what it promised yet."

Marketing position would be best described as multi-modal, rather than purely transit. Dave will contact Cecil Bothwell, Bruce will contact Marc Hunt, Julie will talk to Jan Davis and Esther Manheimer about upcoming priorities.

Multi-Modal Commission -

Bruce and Mariate reported on the second meeting, held Wed, 25 Sept. Topics of discussion included possible synergies between Greenways and I-26 project; Charlotte Street traffic study; and bike planning.

5:00 pm – Public Comment Part II (moved earlier in the agenda to accommodate public request)

Darlene Hamlin needed three buses to get to the TC meeting today; requests that the previous direct bus to downtown be restored. She feels that Emma service needs a lot of help, and is not providing what residents need. Julie responded that improving service to Emma remains a major topic of concern to TC and ART, and offered to have TC members attend community events to help residents use the system better in the meantime.

5:05 pm – Staff Updates

Route Adjustments and On-Time Performance -

Tristan has been working with Yuri to adjust C to improve on-time performance and transfers. The N route is being tweaked to allow better transfers on a more consistent basis. Starting in January 2014, S4 will be paired with S2 (with departures on the half hour), W3 and W4 will be paired with N3. On-time performance issues with

E1 and E2 are under consideration. There was discussion of a new E route which wouldn't go to the VA.

Project List -

TC will be getting project list report (included in meeting info packet) every month. Greenways projects have been added since last month. Mariate has been attending meetings about the Greenways developments.

ART Monthly Reports -

Ridership has been going up. September's increase wasn't as dramatic as July's, but progress seems steady. Public Comment System report is available online, with detailed information about complaint resolution. The system automatically generates a response to person who complained if they provide contact information.

5:25 pm – Agenda Items for Next TC Meeting (5 November 2013)

Rider survey, open TC seats, goals update, TC members' activities

5:28 pm – Meeting Adjourned